

# Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Alvin Little

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## Overview of the Collection

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| <b>Repository:</b>           | The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616<br>info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com   |
| <b>Creator:</b>              | Little Alvin D., 1926-2017  |
| <b>Title:</b>                | The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Alvin Little,  |
| <b>Dates:</b>                | April 24, 2002  |
| <b>Bulk Dates:</b>           | 2002  |
| <b>Physical Description:</b> | 2 Betacame SP videocassettes (0:51:32).   |
| <b>Abstract:</b>             | Civic leader Alvin Little (1926 - 2017 ) worked to desegregate the William Talleyhouse in Bradenton, Florida. Little was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on April 24, 2002, in Bradenton, Florida. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview. |
| <b>Identification:</b>       | A2002_059   |
| <b>Language:</b>             | The interview and records are in English.   |

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## Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Alvin Little, head waiter, letter carrier and humble activist was born on May 10, 1926 in Bradenton, Florida. In August of 1942, with the beginning of World War II, he dropped out of high school and entered the United States Navy. There, he became a Motor Machinist Mate 3rd Class on the cargo ship, *Boston College* in the North Atlantic. Little had no trouble in the Navy, despite the fact that the armed forces were not integrated until 1948. He was discharged in December of 1945 and returned to Florida. There, in 1947, he graduated from Bradenton's Lincoln High School.

He went on to attend Bethune-Cookman College. His education was interrupted when he married and started a family. To support his household, he worked as a waiter for a number of Florida restaurants and resorts. In 1962, he worked as the head waiter at New York-based, William Talleyhouse Cafeteria. When this establishment refused to serve black people, Little and his crew threatened to quit until the place was integrated. It was the first integrated restaurant in Bradenton. Little was hired by the United States Postal Service in 1964; retired as a letter carrier, he later worked as a Certified Nurses Assistant in Bradenton.

Little passed away on February 2, 2017.

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## Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Alvin Little was conducted by Samuel Adams on April 24, 2002, in Bradenton, Florida, and was recorded on 2 Betacame SP videocassettes. Civic leader Alvin Little (1926 - 2017 ) worked to desegregate the William Talleyhouse in Bradenton, Florida.

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## Restrictions

## Restrictions on Access

Restrictions may be applied on a case-by-case basis at the discretion of The HistoryMakers®.

## Restrictions on Use

All use of materials and use credits must be pre-approved by The HistoryMakers®. Appropriate credit must be given. Copyright is held by The HistoryMakers®.

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## Related Material

Information about the administrative functions involved in scheduling, researching, and producing the interview, as well as correspondence with the interview subject is stored electronically both on The HistoryMakers® server and in two databases maintained by The HistoryMakers®, though this information is not included in this finding aid.

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## Controlled Access Terms

This interview collection is indexed under the following controlled access subject terms.

### Persons:

Little Alvin D., 1926-2017

Adams, Samuel (Interviewer)

Stearns, Scott (Videographer)

### Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews  
Little Alvin D., 1926-2017--Interviews

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African American food service employees--Interviews

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African American letter carriers--Interviews

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## Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

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The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

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## Occupations:

Civic Leader

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## HistoryMakers® Category:

CivicMakers

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## Administrative Information

### Custodial History

Interview footage was recorded by The HistoryMakers®. All rights to the interview have been transferred to The HistoryMakers® by the interview subject through a signed interview release form. Signed interview release forms have been deposited with Jenner & Block, LLP, Chicago.

### Preferred Citation

The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Alvin Little, April 24, 2002. The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection, 1900 S. Michigan Avenue, Chicago, Illinois.

### Processing Information

This interview collection was processed and encoded on 6/7/2022 by The HistoryMakers® staff. The finding aid was created adhering to the following standards: DACS, AACR2, and the Oral History Cataloging Manual (Matters 1995).

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## Other Finding Aid

A Microsoft Access contact database and a FileMaker Pro tracking database, both maintained by The HistoryMakers®, keep track of the administrative functions involved in scheduling, researching, and producing the interview.

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## Detailed Description of the Collection

### Series I: Original Interview Footage

Video Oral History Interview with Alvin Little, Section A2002\_059\_001\_001, TRT: 0:29:23  
2002/04/24

Alvin Little was born on May 10, 1926 in Bradenton, Florida to Essie Mae Hamilton and William Little. Little's maternal grandparents were Mack and Mamie Hamilton. His maternal grandparents and his parents divorced. His mother also divorced his step-father which led Little to help provide for his two younger brothers. Little dropped out of Lincoln High School to serve in the U.S. Navy during World War II. In 1947, Little graduated from Bradenton's Lincoln High School and then attended Bethune-Cookman University [Daytona Beach, Florida], but his education was interrupted when he married and farmed with his father-in-law. To support his household, he became a head waiter at several cafeterias. Little was the first African American hired by the United States Postal Service in Bradenton, Florida in 1964.

African American families--Florida.

African American sailors--Social conditions--20th century.

African American food service employees.

African American letter carriers.

Manatee County (Fla.).

Video Oral History Interview with Alvin Little, Section A2002\_059\_001\_002, TRT: 0:22:09  
2002/04/24

Alvin Little recalls working as head waiter to help integrate the William Talleyhouse Cafeteria in Bradenton, Florida in 1962. Little and his crew threatened to quit until the restaurant integrated, and shortly after, the William Talleyhouse Cafeteria was the first integrated restaurant in Bradenton. In 1964, Little was the first African American to work for the United States Postal Service in Bradenton, Florida. Little helped open the door for other African Americans interested in working for the United States Postal Service by collaborating with the post office's superintendent and a high school principal to offer classes on the Civil Service Exam. He overcame his race because of his intelligence and drive to make money. From his own experience as business man, Little advises that African Americans train to enter jobs high in demand. Little reflects on his legacy.

Segregation--Florida.

Civil rights demonstrations.

Social integration--United States.

African American postal service employees.

Race relations.